



## PRESS RELEASE

United States Secret Service  
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### **U.S. Secret Service Serves up Cold Dish of Justice to Gas Pump Skimmers**

WASHINGTON -- On Thanksgiving Day, you may be inventorying seasonings for your "super-secret" stuffing recipe however U.S. Secret Service Special Agents will be up to their elbows in "Operation Deep Impact," a nationwide initiative to find and remove credit card skimming devices installed on fueling station pumps.

While it's a strange way to spend the holiday, what our agents are actually doing is preventing criminals from ruining your Thanksgiving.

An estimated 54 million Americans will travel across town or across the country for Thanksgiving, and while doing so, many will buy gas for their cars. These annual increases in motor travelers on the road during holidays mean bigger paydays for card-skimming financial criminals who target victims at fueling stations.

To kick-start Operation Deep Impact, the Secret Service issued a nationwide alert to our private sector and state and local law enforcement partners. This alert covered detailed technical information regarding what to look for; if skimmers are located how to handle the device; proper evidence collection protocols; and, overall best practices for investigating skimming operations.

More than 400 gas stations in 16 states have already been searched and nearly 200 skimmers recovered from pumps. Secret Service agents, in partnership with fuel companies and law enforcement, will continue to locate and recover illegal credit card skimming devices throughout the holiday.

*Skimming* is a technique that uses electronic devices to steal encoded information from credit cards. Criminals then install the small devices, known as *skimmers*, at gas station pumps where they are able to capture the protected data of unsuspecting victims.

Operation Deep Impact is our fourth and most successful holiday anti-skimming operation this year. So far, the Thanksgiving initiative has prevented an estimated \$6 million in losses to consumers. Previous initiatives took place before Independence Day, Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Fueling stations are a prime target for this type of crime due to the high volume of customers and the criminal's ability to install the devices and recover the stolen data undetected. Because today's gas

pumps are typically unattended, developing suspects and making arrests in skimming cases is difficult - but not impossible. The Secret Service is leading the charge to protect U.S. consumers against this growing cyber-enabled financial crime.

Special agents and investigative analysts from around the country will continue to work closely with state and local law enforcement partners to keep the public informed and apprehend those who are responsible for conducting credit card skimming.

Credit card fraud, including skimming, is a federal offense, and carries stiff penalties including heavy fines and lengthy prison sentences. More information on reporting credit card fraud can be found at [www.secretservice.gov](http://www.secretservice.gov). Select the "About" tab, FAQs, and scroll down to "Protecting Yourself" or simply click [here](#).

This Thanksgiving holiday, we at the U.S. Secret Service are thankful for our partnerships with financial institutions, fuel companies and other law enforcement agencies. These great partnerships help us preserve your financial freedom.

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